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DISCOURSE

ON

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

REV. CHARLES FOLLEN, L. L. D.)

WHO PERISHED, JAN. 13, 1840,

IN THE CONFLAGRATION OF THE BOSTON MOUNTAIN.

(DELIVERED BEFORE THE

MASSACHUSETTS ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY,)

IN THE

MARLBOROUGH CHAPEL,

BOSTON, APRIL 17, 1840.

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DISCOURSE.

It is grateful to the best affections of the heart—it enkindles the purest aspirations of the soul—to think of such a man as Charles Follen. He has lived in a most eventful period of time. He has acted a most conspicuous part, as a champion of humanity, both in the Old World and in the New. His deeds and his words have been such as live forever. They were instinct with truth and love, and shall quicken thousands in the divine life. His dear name shall grow brighter and brighter among those, that are to be embalmed in the gratitude of the redeemed.

But to speak worthily of this man is not in my power. I do not presume that I am able duly to appreciate his excellence. Indeed I fear that I shall not succeed even in communicating my conception of it. If there had been any extravagances in his character, it would be comparatively easy to sketch somewhat that should seem to be a resemblance to it. But all who knew him agree in this, that the powers of his enlarged mind were so equally developed, and the affections of his great heart so harmoniously attuned, that the action and expression of each one obviously contributed to the effect produced by the whole.

Brethren and Sisters, I know you were impelled by your unfeigned reverence for his virtues, and heartfelt gratitude for his services to consecrate this hour to the especial commemoration of our departed friend. He was one of the earliest, most steadfast and efficient promoters of our holy enterprise. Very many are sorrowing because of his death; but there are none, excepting his immediate family, that can have more cause to mourn than ourselves. One of the towers of our strength has fallen.

It is due to him that we tell of his acts. And it will comfort and strengthen us to commune together of one, whose countenance, whose words, whose example, have always encouraged us.

Most grateful has it been to me, to gather up for this occasion my recollections of Dr. Follen, and the incidents in his life, which I have been able to collect from others. I should, however, shrink from the office you have assigned me, if his fair fame were to depend upon my success in delineating his character. But his works and his words praise him, as no description of them can. His life and conversation in the world have spoken for themselves; and there are very many who feel, as I do, a respect and love for him, which cannot be expressed.

Moreover, I know that others, far better able than myself to do him justice, have spoken, or are preparing to speak of him to this generation and to posterity. Truly, it is a hopeful sign of our times, that his death is accounted a public calamity which demands especial notice. Seldom has the untimely removal of any one been so generally lamented. All speak reverently of his name. Some there are who are contributing to record this sentiment in enduring marble, who have hitherto looked with a more than marble indifference upon the highest, the imperishable purpose of his life.

Different eulogists have viewed him from different points, and have given their impression of his character, as they were wont to contemplate it. And it is singular praise, that in whatever light his character has been seen, it has awakened admiration.

We, my brethren and sisters, have revered and loved Dr. Follen, as the fearless, consistent, sagacious advocate—the calm, unyielding, untiring defender of the rights of man—the self-sacrificing brother of the human race. As such we have known him. As such we shall remember him while our being lasts. As such it is incumbent on us to record our sense of his worth. On this aspect of his character, you expect me now to dwell. It is the highest, holiest, best of all. And it happens well, that owing to a concurrence of what we have deemed untoward circumstances, the hour for this solemnity has come,

on the anniversary of the crucifixion of Jesus, whom he loved and followed, as the perfect exemplar of self-sacrifice.

I have not been able to learn as much as I have wished, of the early history of our much lamented brother. His public acts indeed are known to all men. They have become a part of the future annals of Europe. But his rare modesty would never allow him to dwell upon his own actions and words; so that what is known of him has been gathered from incidental allusions, which have dropped from him at different times, in his conversations with divers persons.

Charles Follen was a native of that country, which gave birth to Luther. The light of civil and religious liberty kindled in Wittemburgh shone around his cradle. He was born of Protestant parents, and received a religious education, with little reference to the dogmas of any sect.*

He was born in the early years of the French Revolution, that event which sent a thrill of hope through the hearts of the oppressed subjects of European Despotism.

The Germans, especially those of the smaller members of the Confederacy, hailed with joy the prospect of more liberal civil institutions in France, as the harbinger of a better day for themselves. Our departed friend was just then at an age to receive, into the very depths of his soul, the generous sentiments, that were uttered by the purest, best men of Germany. His father, an enlightened civilian and liberal christian, encouraged the growing ardor of his son, in the cause of freedom and humanity.

But the bright hope, which had risen with the dawn of the French Revolution, and which the first steps of Bonaparte seemed hastening to the meridian, was ere long overshadowed, and at length cast down by the personal ambition of that modern "Scourge of God." Finding themselves so woefully deceived in him, who had vaunted himself the foe of tyrants, the

* "He was born in 1795, at Romrod, in the Grand Duchy of Hesse Darmstadt, one of the Confederated States of the German Empire. He was the second son of Christopher Follen, a Counsellor at Law, and afterwards a Judge, who also held a place in the civil government."

deliverer of the oppressed; mourning the loss of a hundred thousand of their countrymen, who had been sacrificed to his mad schemes of conquest, the German States united with one accord to oppose him. Friends and foes of civil liberty eagerly joined hands against the common enemy—preferring subjection to their hereditary, and now somewhat restricted Princes, to the unlimited sway of the New Usurper.

At this crisis—in this emergency—Charles Follen, then a student at the University of Giesen, and only nineteen years of age, came forward to act his first public part in the great struggle of suffering humanity. With his two brothers, one older the other younger than himself, he entered the allied army in a volunteer corps of young men; and endured the fatigues, and incurred the dangers of those battle-fields, on which were witnessed the death-throes of Bonaparte's ambition. I have heard him describe his feelings, and what he believed to be the feelings of his youthful comrades in that so called "holy war, war of the people." They refused to wear the trappings of soldiers. They needed not "the pomp and circumstance of war" to rouse or sustain the purpose of their souls. They came into the field of mortal strife as men, not soldiers—to contend for liberty, not laurels. When speaking of that momentous period of his life, a solemnity came over his calm, sweet face, his utterance was subdued, his whole frame pervaded by a deep emotion, so that, much as I differed from him in my opinion of even that resort to carnal weapons, I could not doubt that he had thrown himself into the midst of that dread conflict, with a self-sacrificing, I had almost said, a holy spirit. *

Although the issue of the French Revolution cast down the hope of the friends of liberty, that hope was not destroyed. Many, who had made the most determined resistance to Napoleon, were none the less resolved to withstand the aggressions of the hereditary Princes of Europe.

* Körner, "the patriot-poet of Germany," was his contemporary and friend. It is a touching incident, that some of the last efforts of his mind were most successful translations, into our language, of the last of the breathing thoughts and burning words of that enthusiast of liberty, the companion of his earliest exertions in the service of humanity.

Taking advantage of the panic, which the signal successes of the great conqueror had spread among the nations,—the Emperors of Russia and Austria, with the King of Prussia, formed the Holy Alliance, to avert from their beloved subjects the recurrence of such convulsions, as, they vain would have it believed, were the legitimate effects of too much freedom. But it was not so easy as they flattered themselves, to efface from the minds of the people the idea of liberty, and a righteous government. Though Bonaparte had given a serpent to his devoted fellow citizens, who were craving a fish, the people of Europe still cherished the hope, that others would arise, to whom their great interests might safely be entrusted. True, they had been deceived. Still they could not doubt that Freedom was a reality. They more than suspected that it was the birthright of man. When, therefore, the real design of the Holy Alliance became manifest, many of the choicest spirits, who had united under their banner to overthrow the Tyrant of France, uprose to withstand them. None were more resolute, few became more conspicuous than the still youthful Follen, who had scarcely entered upon his professional career. He boldly claimed for his fellow subjects of Hesse Darmstadt, a mitigation of the feudal tenures, under which they were oppressed, and thus first incurred the displeasure of the Grand Duke. There are letters extant from the farmers of that country, in which the importance of his services is gratefully acknowledged.

In 1817—when twenty-two years of age—he took his degree of Doctor of Laws, and became a teacher in the University of Jena. Here he found an atmosphere more congenial than any other to his free spirit. The most distinguished Professors were friends of liberal institutions. And the Duke of Saxe-Weimer was for a while indulgent towards them. At Jena appeared the first periodical publications, which disturbed the sleep of the diplomatists of Frankfort and Vienna. To these publications Dr. Follen contributed. And, even among such men as Dr. Oken, and Professors Fries and Luden, distinguished himself as an advocate of the rights of man. The Sovereigns of Aus-

tria and Prussia were alarmed.* They required the Duke of Saxe Weimer to abridge the liberty he had allowed at his University. When this attempt proved abortive, the Professors above named were proscribed, and the young men of Austria and Prussia, who were students at Jena, were required to leave the infected spot. The persecution of Dr. Follen was carried further. An attempt was made to involve him in the guilt of the deluded murderer of Kotzebue, "that traitor to his birthright—that fawning spaniel of aristocracy—that heartless satirist of liberal institutions—that unblushing hireling of the Russian Autocrat." The youth of Germany had become exasperated against him—and Charles Louis Sand so insane, as to believe it would be doing God service to put the wretch to death. The students at the University, and even some of the Professors, were suspected of being privy to this deed. Dr. Follen was arrested on the charge. He was, as you know he must have been, fully exonerated; but the spirit which dictated his arrest, made it expedient for him to seek another home.

He went into Switzerland—the resort of the freest spirits of Germany. He was appointed a Professor of Civil Law at the University of Bale. Here he became an associate of the illustrious De Wette, who had been driven from Berlin on the same account. Here he continued, both in his lectures and through the press, to give utterance to his liberal opinions. But here he was not beyond the reach of despotic power. In August, 1824, the governments of Prussia, Austria and Russia, demanded of the government of Bale to deliver him up, with the other Professor of Law in their University. At first this demand was refused. When, however, it was returned with threats of serious displeasure, if they persisted in protecting the object of sovereign dread, the government of Bale dared no longer to resist it. Dr. Follen was advised to depart. This he would not do without being forced. They therefore compelled him to go, by

* During the session of the Congress of Laybach, the Emperor of Austria directed the Professors of a public seminary there, "to be careful not to teach their pupils too much; he did not want 'learned or scientific men, but obedient subjects.'"—American Encyclopedia.

passing a resolution to arrest him. He left the city, an object of lively interest to many of the worthiest citizens ; with no other reproach upon his character, but that which was cast upon it by the enemies of freedom. Exiled from Germany as the dreaded foe of the oppressors of his country ! hunted by the allied Sovereigns out of Europe, as if their thrones were insecure while he dwelt on the same continent with themselves ! Surely the man, who made himself such a terror to tyrants, was entitled to a *carte blanche* on the confidence of freemen !

Thus recommended, he came to our country in December, 1824, a few months after the arrival of Lafayette. Let this coincidence arrest a passing notice.

The illustrious Frenchman came to feast his eyes, and rejoice his heart, with a sight of the astonishing growth and unexampled prosperity of a nation, for whose redemption from a foreign yoke, he had, in his early manhood, lavished his fortune and exposed his life. The illustrious German came to act as important a part, "for the achievement of an enterprise, without which that of the Revolution is incomplete ; and which for its magnitude, solemnity and probable results upon the destiny of the world, as far transcends that, as moral truth does physical force." The Frenchman came to receive renewed expressions of the enthusiastic gratitude of this people, whom his sword helped to redeem from political subjection. The German came to help, by his true and searching word, to deliver this people from the far more dreadful bondage of sin—the tremendous sin of holding (in the very sunlight of political science and gospel revelation,) millions of human beings as property, and treating them as domesticated brutes. Follen came to help us do that, which Lafayette grieved to leave undone. He has been cut off in the midst of his glorious career. He has not lived to receive the poor tribute of a nation's thanks. But he has said and done enough to leave an imperishable name behind him—a name that shall be resplendent among the most illustrious, when singleness of heart, integrity of soul, true moral heroism, and unreserved devotion to the cause of impartial liberty, shall be

esteemed as they deserve. Yes—he has said and done enough to gain

That prize, with peerless glories bright,
Which shall new lustre boast,
When victor's wreaths and monarch's gems
Shall blend in common dust.

Nearly the whole of the first year after his arrival he spent in Philadelphia, studying our language. This he acquired with such facility, that before the close of that year he gave a course of public lectures on Civil Law. Lafayette, to whom he was known, and by whom he was highly esteemed, believing that the society of New England, especially of its metropolis, would be more congenial to his tastes and cherished sentiments, more apt to appreciate his worth, and furnish employment for his talents, advised him to remove to Boston. He did so—and in December, 1825, was appointed teacher of the German language in the College at Cambridge, where in 1830, he was raised to a Professorship.

The light in which this country appeared to Dr. Follen when in Europe—the feelings and anticipations, which accompanied him to these shores, were intimated in his manly farewell to Switzerland. “Whereas, the Republic of Switzerland, which has protected so many fugitive princes, noblemen and priests, will not protect me, who, like them, am a republican, I am compelled to take refuge in the great asylum of liberty, the United States of America.” He appears to me, then, like Ram Mohun Roy, the Hindoo lover of the religion of Jesus, when about to visit England. Their anticipations were equally high—their disappointments alike severe. The evangelical Rajah left his country, where he had long mourned over the loathsome degradation of a people grovelling under the grossest idolatry—he left his country that he might strengthen his hope of humanity, by seeing for himself the nations, whose people had for ages enjoyed the heavenly light of Christianity. But ’tis said he found so little in the character and condition of England, answering to what he deemed his just expectations, that he went down there with sorrow to his grave. Dr. Follen when about to quit Switzerland, having found that his labors and sacrifices

availed but little against the hereditary influence of the dynasties of Europe, comforted his worn heart with the promise, that in America he should behold, what he had so ardently toiled to produce in Europe, a government under which men might enjoy and improve the rights of humanity. Having unfeignedly wept with those who weep under oppression, he exulted in the thought, that he was coming, where he should rejoice with those who were rejoicing in liberty. But he soon saw, after his arrival here, that his labors and sacrifices in the cause of liberty were not ended. He was soon persuaded, that so far from reposing on the privileges, which were here accorded to him, fidelity to his principles required, that he should gird himself up again to assert and contend for the natural rights of men.

He had not been long in the United States, before he was painfully struck with the contrast between our institutions, and our habits of thought, and conversation. He was surprised that he so seldom met with a free mind, or saw an individual who acted independently. Often has he been heard to make the same remark with De Tocqueville, who is accounted the most acute and fair observer, that has ever written about our institutions and character. "I know no country in which there is so little true independence of mind and freedom of discussion as in America." "I perceive," said he to an intimate friend, "that liberty, in this country, is a fact rather than a principle." Some of the results of his observations on this lamentable defect in our national character, were given with discretion and frankness, in the Introductory Address, which he delivered to a course of the Franklin Lectures in Boston, November, 1834.

His high appreciation of the sacred rights of the human mind and heart, was soon manifest at the University. It placed his intercourse with the students on a different footing from that of most of the instructors, who had preceded him; and gained an influence over them, that was dependent on what is higher and deeper than authority. It was his wish, that they should think and speak freely on all subjects, which their studies or their times suggested to them; and be restrained in their actions by the enlightened convictions of their understandings, and the

raised affections of their hearts. "Reason gains all men by compelling none." He had been accustomed to see and encourage an ardent love of freedom, a frank and fearless discussion of its principles, among the youth of Germany. No evil had resulted from it there, unless it were evil to send dismay to the hearts of tyrants. And he was unable to conceive that it could do any other mischief here. But it was the policy of those who were in authority over him, to discountenance, if not peremptorily forbid, the open discussion of certain exciting topics, in order to keep the College quiet on one subject at least, which, more than all others, a portion of the students needed to hear fully canvassed, lest they should return to their homes at the South, unconvicted of that tremendous sin, in which the South lies buried,—the inevitable effects of which, if it be not repented of, it made even the unbelieving Jefferson tremble to contemplate. No one could suspect Dr. Follen of being indifferent to the prosperity of the College. No one has intimated that he was unconcerned for the literary improvement of the pupils. On the contrary, it has been publicly declared by one of the Overseers of the College, "that he conscientiously devoted his time and his gifts, and with singular success, to the arduous work of instruction." But he could conceive of no lessons, to be taught human beings, comparable in importance to this—a clear understanding of the rights of man, and a just regard for them.

There was, amongst the most hopeful portion of the young men at Cambridge, great enthusiasm for the character and acquirements of Dr. Follen. His lectures were well attended by them; and he received a reward in their respect and affection, which, added to the approbation of his own conscience, more than repaid him for the loss of the favor of those, on whom the continuance of his Professorship, which was his livelihood, depended. "Coarse rice for food, water for drink, and one's bended arm for a pillow, even if a man have no more than these, with virtue there is enduring happiness;"—but the happiness that is to be found in riches or honors, acquired or retained

by the dereliction of any duty, is as light and uncertain as the fleeting cloud.

In January, 1831, a youth "to fortune and to fame unknown," commenced the publication of a little paper, dedicated to the service of the enslaved. It was commenced with an avowal of the determination "to be as harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice." This was the first trumpet-blast ever blown in the New World for impartial liberty; or rather, I should say, the first that gave not an uncertain sound. It was blown by a man who was no respecter of persons; who had the courage to speak the truth in simplicity; and power to make it heard.

Dr. Follen had then been in a Professor's chair at Cambridge about a year. He had married a woman worthy of his love. He had become a father. He had gathered about him many friends, who loved him for his singular loveliness in social and domestic life. He was admired for his rich and varied endowments, his extensive and accurate knowledge, and for his sound understanding. He was honored for his exertions and sacrifices in Europe in the cause of Liberty. He was cherished as an invaluable acquisition to the literature of our country, and as a most successful teacher of our youth. You see, then, that he had as many reasons as any, and more reasons than most, for remaining quietly in his Professor's chair; contenting himself with an occasional sigh over the wrongs of the slave; or an eloquent condemnation of slavery in the abstract; or the utterance of that form of prayer, that the sovereign disposer of all events would in his own good time cause every yoke to be broken, and oppression to cease. He was occupying a sphere of great responsibility, where, it was intimated to him, he might find enough to fill even the large measure of his ability for labor. Then he was wholly dependent upon his own exertions for the support of his family. Moreover, being a foreigner by birth, he was reminded that it was even less decorous in him, than it might be in others to meddle with "the delicate question," which touched so vitally the institutions of a very sensitive portion of his adopted country.

But Charles Follen was a "genuine man." In godly sincerity

he felt, as well as said, that whatever affected the welfare of mankind was a matter of concern to himself. He was astonished at the apathy of the great and good in our country, to the wretched condition of more than a sixth part of the population; to the disastrous influence of their enslavement upon the characters of their immediate oppressors, upon the well-being of the whole Republic, and the cause of liberty throughout the world. When, therefore, the words of Garrison came to his ears, "he rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent and hast revealed them unto babes, even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Garrison had sounded a note, that thrilled those cords of love, which were so well strung in his true heart, that even a sigh of human misery would call forth a sympathetic response. He sought out the Editor of the Liberator. He found him in a little upper chamber, where were his writing desk, his types and his printing press, his parlor by day, his sleeping room by night, all within a space of less than twenty feet square; and where, with the faithful co-partner* of his early toils, he was living like the four children of Israel in the midst of the corruptions of Babylon, upon pulse to eat and water to drink. This was a sight to fill with hope his sagacious soul. While, therefore, many who accounted themselves servants of God and friends of humanity, thought or affected to think that no good could come out of such a Nazareth, (if indeed they had so much as heard that there was such a Nazareth,) he often went to the Liberator office to see and converse with the young man, who had dared to brave the contumely and detestation of the world, in preaching deliverance to the captives, and liberty to them that are bruised. He was not deterred from identifying himself with the Abolitionists, as so many of the wise and prudent profess to have been, by the severe language and unsparing denunciations used by Mr. Garrison and other members of our body. He did not approve of this style in them, nor did he approve of it in their opposers; and could hardly suppress

* Isaac Knapp.

a smile at the self-complacency with which many would reprobate the severity of the Abolitionists, and in the same breath call them fanatics, incendiaries, madmen, traitors, and even cut-throats. In his view, however, it was not a question of taste or style, that Mr. Garrison had raised for the decision of his countrymen. It was a question of right, of humanity. Dr. Follen did not hesitate to show himself on the side of right, because there were men there, who contended with other weapons than such as he thought proper, or with more vehemence than he deemed necessary. He would much sooner, for he might with more reason, have refused to join himself to the army that overthrew the throne of Napoleon, because many, who were enlisted against the usurper were cruel, licentious soldiers. But in neither case could he regard the conduct, or the misconduct of others, as the index to his duty.

No—he felt if the cause of the crushed, benighted slaves, and their wretched masters, was pleaded unskillfully, there was all the more need, that the wisest and best men in the community should espouse that cause, and show that it could be conducted with equal fidelity, equal ardor, equal strength of argument and power of eloquence, and possibly with better temper. He knew that Mr. Garrison was incited to greater vehemence and severity by the coldness, and heartless indifference of almost all around him; and that nothing would so soon attemper his zeal, as to find himself supported, instead of opposed, by the wisest and best men in the community. He had heard and he felt the force of Mr. Garrison's reply to an early friend, who was remonstrating with him on his violence of language. "Why," said that friend, "you write as if you were all on fire." "I have need to be ALL on fire," was his solemn reply, "for I have mountains of ice about me to melt."

It has been matter of no little surprise with some, that one so mild as Dr. Follen, should have joined himself so early as he did, and adhered so steadfastly as he has done to Mr. Garrison. I know he was as gentle as St. John. But then he had that heroic spirit, which impelled and enabled that gentlest of the Apostles to stand up at the foot of the cross, in face of the infu-

riated multitude. He conferred not with flesh and blood. He stopped not to inquire how it might affect his temporal interests, or even his good name to espouse so unpopular a cause. "Some men," said he, "are so afraid of doing wrong, that they never do right." The shameful fact, that the cause of millions of enslaved human beings was unpopular in a country which made such high pretensions to liberty as ours, was enough to raise him above all personal considerations. He saw that if this land was ever to be redeemed from the chains of iron, and chains of gold, and chains of prejudice, which bind it, it would be so as by fire.

In 1832, the N. E. Anti-Slavery Society was instituted. He approved its principles and purposes. In the fall of 1833 he made himself a member of it. He soon after was elected one of its Vice Presidents, and continued to the time of his death an efficient officer, except during the period of his residence in New-York.

He attended the first New England Anti-Slavery Convention, held in Boston, May, 1834. He was a member of the Committee of Arrangements. He was Chairman of the Committee appointed by that Convention to prepare an Address to the People of the United States. To that Address, written by him, I refer all who would know how deeply he was interested at that time, in the enterprise of the Abolitionists; how thoroughly he understood the principles on which we have from the first relied; and how unfeignedly he desired to make them acceptable to his fellow-citizens, so far as this could be done by a lucid exposition of them, and an earnest appeal in their behalf.

For fourteen months after the first of April, 1835, I was your General Agent and Corresponding Secretary. In this situation it was my happiness to enjoy a frequent personal intercourse with our deceased brother. It was during the most stormy period we yet have known. It was a time to try men's souls. Verily it seemed as if the powers of Hell were let loose.

Our fellow-citizens at the South were exceeding mad. They gnashed their teeth upon us. They were beside themselves with rage. They set all State comity, all law and mercy at

naught. Seizing the reins of the civil magistrate, they drove, Jehu like, through their States, trampling down every one who was even suspected of Abolitionism. The proslavery spirit of the North threw off all disguise, and summoned its agents and engines to do the bidding of the South. George Thompson was here; that glorious man, whom the philanthropists of England delight to honor, to whom the eight hundred thousand redeemed in the Islands of the West owe more than to any other living one—who is now sacrificing himself in exertions, which human strength cannot long endure, that he may break the yoke under which a hundred millions of his fellow subjects are grovelling on the sunny plains of Hindoostan—George Thompson—that incarnation of eloquence was here, laboring more abundantly and with more effect than any, to redeem our country from the sin, shame, sorrow, ruin of slavery—laboring in the spirit of heavenly love, which endureth all things and hopeth all things. His life was put in imminent peril; and all who were known to be Abolitionists were despitefully treated.

Wherever we went, mobs arose to withstand us. Newspapers, handbills, placards, reviled and threatened. The magistrates not only refused us their protection, but in many places openly abetted our persecutors. In Boston, every church was closed against our meetings; and not a hall could we hire save our little one at 46 Washington street. In fact, the Abolitionists were turned out of doors to breast as they could the fury of the storm. The political papers, with one or two exceptions, did all they could to exasperate the public mind, some of them even counselling deeds of blood. And the doors of Faneuil Hall were thrown open, that the gentlemen of property and standing might crowd that sacred place to execrate the cause of liberty, and prepare their creatures to inflict that indelible stain upon the fair fame of our city, the mob of October 21, five thousand strong, which broke up a meeting of Anti-Slavery women—tore down the sign of our Anti-Slavery office—and dragged the Editor of an Anti-Slavery paper through the streets with a halter about him. Almost every one of the clergy stood aloof.

Some held the garments of those who were stoning us. Dr. Channing was the only one of our distinguished men, who dared to say a word in arrest of our persecution; and even he spake with much qualification in our behalf. This is not an exaggerated picture of the condition of the Abolitionists in 1835. I have sketched it, not because I wish to perpetuate the remembrance of your wrongs—and our country's shame, but that I may do justice to the steadfastness and courage of our lamented brother.

In that season of our sorest trial, did Dr. Follen's heart quail for fear? Did his countenance grow pale? Did his voice falter? Was his seat vacant at our Board? No—he was with us, as often as his duties at the University would permit. He aided us by his counsels—he animated us by his resolute spirit—he strengthened us by his calm, determined manner. Often did he show himself at our office. I shall never forget the kind solicitude of his inquiries—nor the generous encouragement of his words—nor the cordial, heart-refreshing tones of his voice. He was at that time a member of our Board of Managers, and came whenever summoned to our deliberations.

In this crisis it was, at our Annual Meeting in January, 1836, that Dr. Follen made his bravest speech. There was not a word, not a tone, not a look of compromise in it. He met our opposers at the very points, where some of our friends thought us obnoxious to blame, and manfully maintained every inch of our ground. Few of us knew he intended to speak, when he came forward with this resolution.

“Resolved, That we consider the Anti-Slavery cause as the cause of philanthropy, with regard to which all human beings, white men and colored men, citizens and foreigners, men and women, have the same duties and the same rights.”

No one can duly appreciate the importance of such a resolution, advocated as it was by such a man, at that time, who does not well remember the state of things in this community at that time.

The Abolitionists were accused of being the cause of the mobs, and other acts of violence, which filled the country with

alarm. He exposed the absurdity of the charge, and showed that "Anti-Abolition mobs, and the impunity of their authors had been justified by our newspapers, ay, even by men of high standing in society, by a mode of reasoning, according to which we ought to condemn and send to prison, not the thief and the cheat, but the man who had been robbed or defrauded."

Again, he showed, as in a blaze of light, how little they understood of the genius of our holy enterprise, who objected to us, and excused themselves from standing aloof from us, because we admitted colored persons, to take part with us in our Anti-Slavery meetings and societies. "Have we any other object," said he, "than to impress upon the community this one principle, that the colored man is a MAN? And on the other hand, is not the prejudice, which would exclude colored people from our meetings and societies here, the same which, in the Southern States, dooms them to perpetual bondage? How can we have the effrontery to expect the white slaveholder of the South to live on terms of civil equality with his colored slave, if we, the white Abolitionists of the North, will not admit colored freemen as members of our Anti-Slavery Societies?"

He next addressed himself to the objection, that we had given just cause of offence to our fellow citizens by encouraging the interference of foreigners. Here he glanced at the meanness and virulence, with which he had himself been assailed, as an ungrateful, meddlesome foreigner, although he had then been naturalized more than five years. He only glanced at it, however. He could never dwell upon any personal matter. He alluded to this disagreeable trifle, as he called it, because of the great principle involved in it. He maintained that the Anti-Slavery cause being the cause of man, knows no difference between natives and foreigners. He paid a beautiful tribute to the magnanimous self-devotion of George Thompson, who had a little while before been so rudely driven from our shores, whose only fault was that he was more of a republican than the people of the United States, and who had gone from city to city, and town to town, scattering with the lightening flashes of his eloquence, the truths we had suffered to lie buried in the

Declaration of our country's Independence. Nay more, Dr. Follen went on to this high position, that "As citizens of the world, as members of the human family, as christians, we look upon every one as a fellow-citizen, as a neighbor, who defends the rights and respects the feelings of all men; while he who does not see in every human being an equal and a brother, whether he be born here or elsewhere, he alone is regarded by us as a stranger and an enemy."

Lastly, he asserted more distinctly than ever had been done before, and maintained as he was able, the right and duty of women to bear an equal part in the labors of the Anti-Slavery cause. Here he could not refrain himself from speaking with contempt of "the coarse attacks and flattering sophisms, by which men have endeavored to entice or drive women from this and from many other spheres of moral action." He warmly commended the moral courage, the sense of religious duty, and sympathy with the oppressed, which alone could have impelled women to embrace the unpopular, unfashionable, obnoxious principles of the Abolitionists. He regarded it just as impertinent in men to dictate to women what course they should pursue, as it would be in women to dictate to men. He thought it altogether more becoming to leave them to their own sense of propriety, than to assume to regulate their feelings, measure their words, and shape their actions for them. "It is natural," said he, "that the cry of misery, the call for help, that is now spreading far and wide, and penetrating the inmost recesses of society, should thrill, with peculiar power, through the heart of woman. For it is woman, injured, insulted woman, that exhibits the most baneful and hateful influences of slavery. But," he added, with deep emotion, "I cannot speak of what the free woman ought and must feel for her enslaved sister—because I am overwhelmed by the thought of what we men, we who have mothers, wives, and daughters should not only feel, but do, and dare, and sacrifice, to drain the marshes, whose exhalations infect the moral atmosphere of society."

I would that there were time for me to give you a larger abstract of this speech, nay, to read the whole of it. But I must

pass on. Let me here only express the hope, nay, the expectation, that this speech, and his Address to the People of the United States, together with an article from his pen on "Anti-Slavery Principles and Proceedings," in the *Christian Examiner*, for November, 1838—will ere long be republished by this Society, in a style that shall give them a place among our permanent volumes. They have ever been highly esteemed by us. But we have been so much impelled by circumstances to use the forms of more excited speech, that we have not valued as highly as we ought, a calmer utterance. But we shall now realize how fitly spoken were all the words of Follen. In his writings will be found the essential principles of Abolitionism, stated without exaggeration, defended without undue passion, in a style so perspicuous that the unlearned cannot mistake his meaning, yet so pure, so finished, that the most refined may relish it. They who turn away from his writings unconvinced, unmoved in the cause of the enslaved, can have no relish for "the pure milk of the word." They must be unwilling to come to the truth. They must love darkness rather than light.

It is not easy even for us to recall, and it is impossible to give to those who were not then Abolitionists, a clear idea of the state of this community at the time the above mentioned speech was made, and for some months afterwards. The Anti-Abolition mobs, which had rioted throughout the Northern States; the great anti-liberty meeting in Faneuil Hall; and the outrages perpetrated by the gentlemen of Boston upon the Anti-Slavery Society, and the Editor of the *Liberator*, encouraged the slave holders to rise in their demands. Official communications were transmitted by several Southern Legislatures to the Executive of Massachusetts, requesting our General Court to enact laws, making it penal for the citizens of this State to form Societies for the Abolition of Slavery, or to print or to speak Anti-Slavery sentiments. A distinguished legal gentleman of Boston had published it as his opinion, that the procedure of the Abolitionists was contrary to both Constitutional and Statute Law. One of the Judges of our Courts, in his charge to the Grand Jury, more than intimated that we had committed acts punish-

able at common law. And even His Excellency, in his annual speech alluded to these opinions, and gave them the sanction of his approbation. That part of his speech, together with the communications from the Southern Legislatures, was referred to a Joint Committee of the Senate and House, the majority of whom, there was too much reason to apprehend, were predisposed to do whatever would appease the South.

At this juncture, your Board of Managers thought it incumbent upon them to seek an interview with the above Committee, to avert if they might, any action on the part of our Legislature, that would tend in any measure to abridge the liberties of speech and the press, or to encourage the continuance of popular violence.

Dr. Follen was one of those selected by the Board to appear before the Committee, for this important purpose. His conduct on that memorable occasion commanded your admiration. It was worthy of himself. Standing before that Committee, he evinced the same calm, invincible spirit of resistance to wrong, that had animated him when he withstood, at Bale, the demands of the Allied Sovereigns of Europe. In both cases it was principle that he contended for. In both it was the violation of principle that he chiefly dreaded.

A committee of the Massachusetts Legislature might not be so august a presence as the Holy Alliance; but in his regard, the occasion which called him to the Hall of our Representatives, was as much more momentous than the occasion on which he withstood the Allied Sovereigns at Bale, as the infringement of the liberties of speech, by a Democratic government, would be more disastrous to the cause of freedom, than any encroachment on human rights by absolute monarchs. We were all impressed by his intent look, his earnest, solemn manner. And we can never cease to be grateful to him, for his pertinacity in maintaining his own rights, and the rights of those for whom he appeared, against the aggressive overbearance of the Chairman of that Committee. I have sometimes thought it was the turning point of our affairs, in this Commonwealth.

Soon afterwards, he removed to New-York, and became pastor of the first Unitarian Church. It was an eligible situation, one which it was supposed by many he would be so desirous to retain, that he would allow his abolitionism to become latent; or at least refrain from giving it free course in the pulpit. But they knew not the man. He continued to do there, as he had done here. Modestly, mildly, yet distinctly, and with determination, he avowed and maintained his faith in the sentiments and purposes of our Society. Such was the confidence of the Abolitionists in him there, that he was soon chosen a member of the Executive Committee of the American Anti-Slavery Society. He accepted without hesitation the appointment. And those who acted with him, in that public and highly responsible situation, have testified that "his sound judgment, his discriminating intellect, his amenity of manners, and his uncommonly single-hearted integrity, greatly endeared him to his associates in that Board, by whom his memory will long be cherished with affectionate respect."

But we can ask no higher evidence of his faithfulness while there, than the fact, that his abolitionism was the cause of his separation from the society, to which he had ministered, at the expiration of eighteen months.

Soon after his return to this vicinity, he became associated with you again in an official capacity. His death has vacated a most important place in your Board of Managers. The present meeting testifies how highly you valued his services to the last. One of our ablest—certainly our best man is taken from us.

You have appointed me to express our profound sense of the loss we have sustained. Still more, you wish me gratefully to acknowledge the inestimable value of his testimony—(now sealed in death—) to the justice and momentous importance of the Anti-Slavery cause. That such a man as Dr. Follen—a man on whom encomiums are bestowed, that must appear extravagant to those who did not know him—encomiums that have very seldom been accorded to any of our race—that such a man was, from an early period of our enterprise to the last

moment of his life, an avowed, active, official, immediate, Abolitionist, is a testimony to the truth of our principles, and the general propriety of our measures, the weight of which must impress itself wherever his character is duly appreciated. Had there been only one obvious deficiency in his mind or heart, to that our opposers might, with some plausibility perhaps, attribute his zeal in the Anti-Slavery cause. But they cannot attribute it to his want of knowledge, for there are very few in our community who can compare with him in the variety, extent and accuracy of his information, especially in the science of human nature, the rights of man, and the principles of natural and civil law—for to the study of these he had devoted the best years of his life. It cannot be said by any who knew him, that he was hurried into this cause by the impetuosity of his feelings; nor that he was misled because of his too easy and yielding disposition; for no part of his character was more conspicuous, than his deliberation, calmness, independence of judgment, and freedom from passion. Will any one intimate that it was ambition, that tempted him to become an Abolitionist? It may have been. It was—if that were ambition, which prompted Jesus of Nazareth, to cast all worldly, temporal, selfish considerations behind him; and for the sake of truth, justice and mercy, to hazard the displeasure of the wise and prudent, the priests and rulers of the people; subject himself to poverty and expose himself to death. If there has been a man of this generation, who has borne the cross of Christ, that man was our lamented brother. His testimony then is above all suspicion—clear, calm, unwavering; and sustained by a force of reasoning, which our opposers will find it easier to evade than to repel. He is gone. But, blessed be God! his testimony remains. It cannot be lost. It is now his hallowed legacy to the enslaved, a legacy which even their masters, who may rob them of every thing else, cannot appropriate to themselves—an inheritance to them, that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.

Brethren and sisters—the duty you assigned to me for this occasion is now discharged, as I have been able. I have not

attempted a complete description of the character in all its parts. I have attempted no analysis of his virtues. I have spoken of his intellectual powers and attainments only incidentally. I have endeavored to keep your eyes and my own fixed upon him in a higher aspect; as the fearless, consistent advocate, the calm, unyielding defender of the rights of man; the self-sacrificing brother of the human race: and is not this the highest, holiest, best of all? Of what avail would have been his eloquence, simple, earnest, impressive as it was, of what avail though he had spoken as an angel, if he had not dared to speak for the down-trodden, the outraged of our own race, who may not speak for themselves—what more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal? Of what avail would have been his learning, varied, extensive, profound as it was, ay, of what avail though he had possessed all knowledge, had understood all mysteries, and had been able to remove mountains of difficulty that encumber questions in Theology, or mooted points in any other science, of what avail, if he had forborne, as so many of the wise have done, to touch with one of his fingers the grievous burthens, that the despots of Europe and America have bound upon men's shoulders? Nay, further, I submit, of what avail would have been his patriotism, his ardor in the cause of liberty in Europe—of what avail that he roused the young men of Germany by his words, and animated them by his example, to oppose with invincible courage the progress of the modern Attila; and gave his body, ere yet it had acquired the strength of manhood, to the fatigues and perils of the battle-fields, where Napoleon was the foe!—of what avail, that he sacrificed all his posts of honor, all his hopes of civil and literary preferment, and renounced his home and country rather than acquiesce in the hereditary wrongs of the people—of what avail, that he spake so boldly for freedom as to make himself especially obnoxious to the Holy Alliance of Sovereigns, and to be compelled by them to flee from the hemisphere, on which they trod, and come a penniless pilgrim to our shores,—of what avail, I submit, would all his sufferings and sacrifices in the Old World have been, if his zeal had tired, if his love of lib-

erty and right had waxed cold, or his courage failed, when here he found millions of his adopted countrymen, groaning under an oppression more grinding than that from which he had been striving to deliver Germany, ay, dragging

“the chain

Which not even Russia's menials wear.”

Of what avail, I ask, would all his sufferings and sacrifices in Europe have been, if he had become silent and inactive in America? They would have profited him nothing. They would have profited the cause of humanity nothing. They would have profited him nothing; for that man is not profited by his trials, who is not strengthened and quickened by them to meet and answer higher demands upon his faith and fortitude. They would have profited the cause of the oppressed nothing, nay—worse than nothing; for had he been indifferent to that system of outrages upon humanity established in this Republic, his sufferings and sacrifices for liberty in Europe might have been appealed to as presumptive evidence, that he saw little or nothing wrong in the despotism of America.

But his charity never failed. It was the spirit which animated his life in the land that gave him birth. It was the spirit that directed and sustained his whole course in the land where he has finished his earthly career. Charles Follen was a philanthropist—not a mere patriot. He was a lover of men, not merely of Germans. He was a lover of all men—not of white men only. He was a dear child of our Heavenly Father, and therefore his sympathy with humanity was profound, impartial, quick and ever active. This was the crown of his goodness! This was the glory of his greatness!

He is taken from us. But he is not lost to us. His words remain. He still speaks to the understandings and hearts of the people. His words shall now come to them as the admonition of a being in the unseen world, “break every yoke and let the oppressed go free.” His example lives. It lives for us. It lives for us, and shall animate us to duty, and sustain us in trial. Death has hallowed the lesson of his life. Our desire to resemble him shall be even more earnest, now that the beau-

tiful original is withdrawn from our sight. His example lives. It lives for others, and shall quicken into the life of active philanthropy, thousands who are now dead in their indifference to the cries of the stripped and outraged slave; or who hurry by him through fear of the loss or the personal harm they might incur, if they should venture to bind up his wounds, or attempt to take him to a place of safety.

Much as our departed friend was loved, much as he was revered, none fully realized his surpassing excellence. Why was it so? The truly great man is unconscious of his greatness, and imposes not the sense of it upon others. He acts his part without parade, without effort. He never loses a childlike simplicity, for he seeks not his own glory. He asks not to be admired or even observed, and those who are living in the light of his life, are often as unmindful of him, as we are apt to be of the sun. Men might never think of the sun if it did not set. So they seldom realize the worth of the truly great man, until he is taken away. Not while he was living among men was the name even of Jesus Christ exalted above every name. And not until now that he is dead, has the truly christian excellence of Follen come to be appreciated, as it should be, by others or by ourselves.

He has gone from us, but he has not ceased to be. Such a mind and heart as his cannot be extinguished. We feel assured that a spirit like his must survive the wreck of matter, must live forever. He is to us another witness of immortality. "He that liveth and believeth on Jesus, as he did, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

ORDER OF SERVICES

IN COMMEMORATION OF THE LIFE AND CHARACTER OF

CHARLES FOLLEN:

HELD AT THE

MARLBOROUGH CHAPEL,

APRIL 17, 1840,

BEFORE THE

MASSACHUSETTS ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY.

PRAYER,

BY HENRY WARE, JR.

HYMN,

BY JOHN PIERPONT.

O, not for thee we weep :—we weep
For her, whose lone and long caress,
And widow's tears, from fountains deep,
Fall on the early fatherless.

'Tis for ourselves we mourn :—we mourn
Our blighted hopes, our wishes crossed,
Thy strength, that hath our burdens borne,
Thy love, thy smiles, thy counsels lost.

'Tis for the slave we sigh :—we sigh
To think thou sleepest on a shore
Where thy calm voice and beaming eye
Shall plead the bondman's cause no more.

'Tis for our land we grieve :—we grieve
 That Freedom's fane, Devotion's shrine,
 And Faith's fresh altar thou shouldst leave,
 And they all lose a soul like thine.

A soul like thine—so pure a soul,
 Wife, friends, our land, the world must miss :
 The waters o'er thy corse may roll—
 But thy pure spirit is in bliss.

DISCOURSE,

BY SAMUEL J. MAY.

HYMN,

BY MARIA W. CHAPMAN.

Oh, Father ! from the happy spheres
 Wherein thou dwellest, hear the hymn
 So faintly uttered through these tears,
 Which make the eyes that shed them dim.

Oh, let thy comfort from above,
 To every grief-worn heart appear,
 Till this dark mystery remove,
 And eye and faith alike are clear !

Oh, Jesus ! through our stricken souls,
 Thy free, o'ermastering spirit pour,
 To bear us onward, though there rolls
 The oppressor's wrath our steps before :

That when our work on earth is done,
 This true soul, taken from our need,
 May welcome us before thy throne,
 With the glad myriads of the Freed !

BENEDICTION,

BY J. V. HIMES.